

VZCZCXRO5247  
RR RUEHMR  
DE RUEHMR #0553/01 2761129  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 031129Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3368  
INFO RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 3767

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MASERU 000553

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/IWI (ANDREA BOTTNER) AND AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: ANACLETTA KEISO MATASHANE-MARITE, NOMINEE FOR SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

SIPDIS

REF: STATE 126072

¶1. Embassy Maseru is proud to nominate Ms. Anacletta Keiso Matashane-Marite for the 2008 Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. As instructed REFTEL, we will also send this nomination by unclassified e-mail.

¶2. The following is Ms. Keiso's official nominating information:

Name:	Keiso, Anacletta
Surname:	Matashane-Marite
Job Title:	National Coordinator, Women in Law in Southern Africa
Date of Birth:	07/07/1964
Country of Birth:	Lesotho
Citizenship:	Lesotho
Address:	23 Mots'oene Rd, Industrial Area, Maseru 105, Lesotho
Telephone:	+266 5885-7042
Email:	matashanemarite@yahoo.com
Passport Number:	RA671117

Justification:

For the last 15 years, Mrs. Keiso Matashane Marite has served as a tireless and outspoken advocate of women's rights and has led the liberation of Lesotho's women. Her courage and incomparable strength led her to break the national silence on women's rights in a predominantly patriarchal society in which women's issues are often considered a source of conflict and kept out of public discourse.

Mrs. Matashane-Marite first came to the forefront of the battle for gender equality in Lesotho as part of the Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) organization. She immediately focused her research work on projects addressing the legal and social status of women in modern Lesotho. The work of her research team served as a catalyst for Lesotho's recent policy and legal reform in the field of gender and human rights.

Mrs. Matashane-Marite is well known for her travels to remote mountain areas to reach out to marginalized women in Lesotho to present key legal and socio-economic principles to women who otherwise would not have known their rights. These pressing and culturally sensitive issues include the inheritance rights of women, sexual violence, and child custody laws.

While advocating for women's rights, Mrs. Matashane-Marite has addressed various fora including the U.S. Embassy Maseru Women's Month Conference in March 2007. She has worked as a consultant on gender issues with organizations such as the World Food Program (WFP), the Southern Africa Development Community's

(SADC) Gender Unit, Gender Links, and the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA).

She has authored a number of works concerning critical legal as they pertain to women. Her publications include:

- Inheritance in Lesotho; Co-authored with P. Letuka, L. Mbatha, M. Mohale, and M. Mamashela (WLSA, 1994)
- Widowhood, Inheritance Laws, Customs, and Practice in Southern Africa (The Role and Concept of Heir: A Case of Confusion); Co-authored with P. Letuka (WLSA, 1995)
- Beyond Inequalities: Women in Lesotho; Co-authored with P. Letuka and B.M. Morolong (WLSA & SARDC, 1997)
- Sexual Violence in Lesotho: The realities of Justice for Women; Co-authored with Chaka-Makhooane, Letuka, Majara, Matela-Gwintsa, Morolong and Sakoane (Moriya Lesotho, 2002)
- A Critical Analysis of Women's Access to Land; Co-authored with Dingake, Aphane, Gwaunza, Bbuku-Chuulu, Mvududu, White, and Andrade (WLSA, 2001)
- Lobola: Its Implications for Women's Reproductive Rights; Co-authored with Mvududu, Joseph, Letuka, Kaunda, Tembo, Hlanze, Chileshe, and Nzira (WLSA/Weaver Press, 2002)
- Gender and Elections in Lesotho: Perspectives on the 2002 Elections; co-authored with P. Letuka and M. Mapetla (EISA Research Report 4, 2004)

It is due to the years of groundwork laid by women such as Mrs. Matashane-Marite that Lesotho has made recent breakthroughs such as the passage of the "Married Persons Equality Act." Before the passage of this act in late 2006, married women were considered legal minors and were not permitted by law to enter into legally binding contracts. They could not own land and had no access to the services of financial institutions without

MASERU 00000553 002 OF 002

their husbands' or male relative co-signing documents to demonstrate legal consent. The passage of this act removed these blatantly discriminatory legal provisions, and Mrs. Matashane-Marite's work was key to this victory for Lesotho's civil rights environment.

13. Embassy Maseru thanks G/IWI for its consideration, and would be happy to provide any additional information on Ms. Matashane-Marite's background.  
NOLAN